

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Since speaking requires oral communication skills including grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension, speaking is the most important skill that students must learn (Brown, 2004). Furthermore, speaking is more important than the other three language skills reading, writing, and listening according to Ur (1996). This is because students' proficiency in the target language is the main indicator of their progress in mastering it. Speaking is the most difficult and stressful skill for foreign language learners, although it is said to be the most crucial skill in utilizing English for communication (Horwitz & Schallert, 1999). According to Oxford (1990), the majority of students find speaking in English intimidating. This problem stems from students' limited vocabulary and anxiety about grammatical errors, which makes them feel uncomfortable speaking in English.

When learning a foreign language, the most important factors that demand speaking skills are anxiety and stress (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Students who live in environments where English is not their native language face several challenges when using the language, such as limited exposure and opportunities to speak English. As a result, when asked to speak English in class, students may experience anxiety (Oxford, 2002). Speaking requires many additional skills, such as word identification, pronunciation, comprehension, and meaning, which can make learning grammatical rules and word meanings more challenging for newcomers to the language (Fielding, 2007). Learning a language can be considered a psychologically unpleasant proposition because it directly damages one's worldview and self-concept (Guiora, 1983). Anxiety is one of the strongest predictors of success when learning a foreign language (MacIntyre, 1999). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) found that speaking proficiency was more strongly related to anxiety than other language skills. Speaking involves the spontaneous

manifestation of knowledge, which may be one of the main reasons behind this statement. The lack of opportunities to use the target language verbally is the second main factor supporting this claim.

According to Clement et al. (1977; 1980), there appears to be a negative correlation between students' success and their anxiety levels related to foreign languages. Specifically, higher anxiety levels are associated with lower accomplishment. Students' anxiety related to learning a foreign language is mostly brought on by their undeveloped ability to communicate in that language (Horwitz, 2001). According to Said & Weda (2018), students often struggle to articulate their ideas and thoughts clearly while speaking in the target language because they are nervous.

Youngsters with lesser abilities typically exhibit higher levels of anxiety than youngsters with better abilities, according to a notable resemblance in studies (Cox, 1962; Cox & Hammond, 1964; Levey et al., 1969; Gaudry & Spielberger, 1971).

If students' unfavorable expectations are shaped by their unpleasant learning experiences, they will continue to do poorly in school, which will make them more anxious (Abu-Rabia, 2004). Speaking with native speakers was the most common cause of fear, according to Woodrow (2006). This occurs as a result of the students' continued ignorance of the foreign language and their lack of opportunity to practice speaking it, especially when engaging with native speakers.

"The control over one's achievement is assumed to depend on causal expectations that imply appraisals of control." according to Pekrun's EVTA model (1992). Furthermore, he asserted that anxiety is connected to how one judges a situation's threat level as well as to one's capacity to handle certain circumstances.

Azizifar et al. (2014) found that lack of preparation, low self-confidence, and fear of failing English lessons are the primary causes of students' anxiety. Fears such as the fear of making mistakes when speaking

in English and the fear of being laughed at are the main causes of anxiety (Liu, 2007). According to Capan & Simsek (2012), students' success was greatly impacted by their anxiety related to foreign languages.

Studies on the specifics of language anxiety have shown evidence of its crippling consequences on the process of learning a foreign language. In terms of cognitive abilities, nervous students typically struggle to integrate information during the learning process and have decreased language output responsiveness (Krashen, 1985). The three phases of cognitive processing input, processing, and output are similarly adversely affected by anxiety, both directly and indirectly (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Research has shown that students' achievement in English lessons is negatively affected by anxiety associated with foreign language learning in general and anxiety associated with specific skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

In addition to its detrimental effects on pupils' academic performance and language acquisition, anxiety can occasionally help with language acquisition. It has been discovered that encouraging anxiety in students motivates them to take on the new learning task and adopt the approach behavior (Scovel, 1991). Conversely, crippling anxiety has been shown to drive pupils to abandon the learning activity, hence encouraging the adoption of avoidance behavior (Scovel, 1991).

According to several studies, women suffer anxiety at a higher level than men. It occurs because of the societal definition of gender, which holds that women should be more emotionally sensitive in order to expose them to stresses unique to their gender (Drogenbroeck et al., 2018).

According to Ekin Ergun's (2011) research, anxiety levels are greater among female students than male students. According to the study, the pupils' achievement was impacted by their families' excessive pressure. Furthermore, Gerencheal (2016) discovered that anxiety levels were greater among female students compared to male students. The researcher's own experience suggests that Ethiopian culture may have a significant impact on this result. There, women's quiet grew to be seen as admirable. This prejudice limits the

active participation of women in their educational pursuits and encourages them to be mute. It is inevitable that this stereotype would make female pupils feel more appreciative and irritated whenever they are asked to speak English in class. Piechurska-Kuciel (2012) cites research by Bello (1995) that corroborates Gerencheal's claim. Persistently linked to the stereotype of women that perpetuates the idea of feminine inferiority, women experience somewhat greater anxiety when speaking in public than men. Machida (2001) discovered that, in comparison to their male counterparts, female students had higher levels of anxiety. According to a research by Cheng (2002), female students had noticeably higher levels of anxiety than their male counterparts. Rezazadeh & Tavakoli (2009) also discovered that women have higher levels of anxiety than men.

Numerous studies conducted in Indonesia have revealed that female students typically experience higher levels of anxiety than male students. Yassin (2018) discovered that female students at SMPN 4 Malang, SMA Taman Harapan Malang, and an Islamic university in Malang had higher levels of anxiety than male students. Then, Maharyadin et al. (2022) discovered that female students at Mulawarman University's English Department experienced greater anxiety levels than male students.

As we have seen, many students feel nervous when trying to learn a new language, and this is especially true when speaking the target language in class. Additionally, previous studies have demonstrated that as compared to male learners, female learners often exhibit higher levels of anxiety. Comparable studies are relatively uncommon in Indonesia, particularly in Bali. Then, it is quite uncommon to find junior high school children as participants in research of the kind that is the topic of comparable studies. In order to ascertain the anxiety levels of the students at SMP Negeri 11 Denpasar, the researcher set out to conduct research on the anxiety that comes with learning to speak English. In addition, the researcher sought to determine whether there were any appreciable differences in the anxiety levels of male and female students.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

As speaking involves grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and understanding, it is essential for learning English (Brown, 2004). Despite its significance, it is sometimes the most difficult ability for students to master (Horwitz & Schallert, 1999). Many students find it stressful because they are afraid of making mistakes or don't have the necessary vocabulary (Oxford, 1990). Limited exposure and practice opportunities, as well as the complexity of speaking, might exacerbate this fear (Oxford, 2002; Fielding, 2007).

Studies reveal that anxiety has a detrimental effect on language proficiency, especially during speaking, which necessitates the spontaneous application of information (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). This anxiety is exacerbated by elements such as trepidation and the dread of failure (Azizifar et al., 2014; Liu, 2007). Gender disparities also come into play; women are often more anxious because of social expectations (Droogenbroeck et al., 2018; Gerencheal, 2016). Research conducted in Indonesia demonstrates that female students tend to be more worried than their male counterparts (Yassin, 2018; Maharyadin et al., 2022).

Nonetheless, little is known about junior high school students' anxiety related to learning a foreign language in Indonesia, especially in Bali. This study aims to fill this gap by examining anxiety levels at SMP Negeri 11 Denpasar and comparing differences between male and female students.

1.3 The Scope of the Study

The explanation provided above suggests that the variables influencing the process of learning a foreign language is a broad subject. The investigator would focus the investigation on the student's psychological aspects in order to narrow the problem's scope. Moreover, would be restricted to concerns related to foreign languages. The knowledge that language anxiety has a substantial negative influence on the teaching and learning process is the basis for the choice to limit the problem to this one.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study is to characterize the anxiety related to foreign languages that both male and female English language learners at SMP Negeri 11 Denpasar encounter. These are the formulations of the research questions:

1. What are the foreign language anxiety levels of male and female students of SMP Negeri 11 Denpasar?
2. Is there any significant difference in foreign language anxiety between male and female students of SMP Negeri 11 Denpasar?

1.5 The Purpose of the Study

This study's main goal is to determine how anxious the pupils are about learning a foreign language. The goals of the research may be expressed more precisely as follows:

1. To examine the levels of foreign language anxiety experienced by male and female students at SMP Negeri 11 Denpasar while learning English.
2. To determine if there is a significant difference in foreign language anxiety levels between male and female students at SMP Negeri 11 Denpasar when learning English.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

The goal of this project is to produce findings that will improve the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages. The following are possible outcomes:

1. Scientific significance: The study's findings may support and add to existing hypotheses on anxiety related to learning a foreign language.
2. Empirical significance: The study's methodology and conclusions may persuade further researchers to look into this area further.
3. Pragmatic significance: The findings may offer insightful information to educators, learners, and administrators, especially with regard to the planning and implementation of English language education in junior high schools.